

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RONALD J. TENPAS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that HAROLD "HANK" HART, JR., age 37, of Alton Illinois, was sentenced Monday in U.S. District Court in East Saint Louis, Illinois. HART previously pled guilty to Making a False Bank Record Entry, a Class B Felony. HART was ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine and placed on supervised release for three years.

HART, the owner of Hart Construction, Inc., told the court that from September of 2002 through February 2003, he and a bank officer caused a false bank entry to be created without the authority of the bank's directors. This entry falsely showed Hart Contracting, Inc. to have more than \$350,000 in assets in a bank account that Hart Construction, Inc. did not, in fact, possess. HART was able to show capital and assets without undertaking the burdens of actually obtaining a loan, assuming the periodic payment of interest, or to provide collateral for a loan such as a pledge against real property and a personal guarantee. This deception allowed Hart Construction, Inc. to artificially inflate its bond coverage and bid on projects for which Hart Construction, Inc. might not otherwise have been eligible.

To the extent this release may refer to suspects or defendants who have been charged with the described offenses, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury. The investigation was conducted by the United States Secret Service in Springfield, Illinois and the Internal Revenue Service in Fairview Heights, Illinois. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Andrew J. Lay.